

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Appln. No. 10/541,170

- 7 -

October 31, 2007

REMARKS

Applicant requests that the claim amendments provided herein, canceling Claims 35, 38, 40, 49 and 50, be entered prior to examination on the merits. The aforementioned claims are canceled without prejudice for the sole purpose of conforming to the requirements of 37 CFR 1.75(b) to afford a set of claims having a number not exceeding a total of 25, of which a maximum of five may be independent. Upon entry of this Preliminary Amendment, the present application presents 25 claims, one of which is independent, for prosecution on the merits.

As this Preliminary Amendment is being filed before a first Office Action on the merits, applicant is also filing a request for refund of excess claim fees under 37 CFR 1.117.

Respectfully submitted,

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